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PROPOSAL FOR A UNFCCC WORK PROGRAMME ON CLIMATE AND NATURE

WWF suggests a work programme under the UNFCCC/Paris Agreement negotiations to take forward the UAE legacy by operationalizing the alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework mandated by the Global Stocktake (GST). This could be achieved through the implementation of national plans required under both Conventions and synergetic enabling conditions. The workstream will also aim to connect those plans to the nature-related Action Agenda and Presidency pledges and initiatives, especially the ones from COP28. Such a workstream can be created in a cover decision.

WWF is also supportive of a CBD/UNFCCC Joint Work Programme as proposed by **Boran and Pettorelli**; the workstream we propose under the UNFCCC could be either an additional feature for implementation or a stepping stone towards the Joint Work Programme. We also see the proposal by the Climate Action Network (CAN) of an Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on ecosystem integrity as a complementary proposal. The AHTEG could report to the workstream or provide technical papers for the discussions proposed.

Rationale

The convergence between climate and biodiversity has been getting increased recognition both from a scientific and a political perspective. Climate change has been recognized by the IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (2019) as the third driver of biodiversity loss; in its Sixth Assessment Report the IPCC has recently recommended that 30% to 50% of Earth's land, freshwater, and ocean needs to be protected. Last year also saw a Global Report on Tipping Points¹ that highlights that negative tipping points will have devastating impacts on people and ecosystems.

In its Article 5, the Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of taking action to conserve and enhance, as appropriate, sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests. In 2022, the UNEA has agreed on a definition for Nature-based Solutions (UNEA-5 Resolution). Under the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December 2022, has a target to “*minimize impacts of climate change and ocean acidification including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based*

approaches while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity” (Target 8).

Within the UNFCCC/Paris Agreement, the cover decisions from COP26 and COP27 have recognized the value of nature to keep 1.5°C within reach and for adaptation. The UAE Consensus from COP28 went even further and emphasized *the importance of conserving, protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through enhanced efforts towards halting and reversing deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by conserving biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* (Decision 1/CMA.5, Article 33). Parties are also invited to preserve and restore oceans and coastal ecosystems and scale up, as appropriate, ocean-based mitigation action.

1 <https://report-2023.global-tipping-points.org/>

The UAE Consensus encourages the implementation of “*integrated, multi-sectoral solutions, such as.. [...]. nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, and protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems, including forests, mountains and other terrestrial and marine and coastal ecosystems, which may offer economic, social and environmental benefits such as improved resilience and well-being..[...].*”. Similarly, the COP28 decision on establishing the framework for Global Goal on Adaptation, known as the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, has a standalone target on ecosystems and biodiversity (Decision 2/CMA.5). This further demonstrates the very relevant and crucial interlinkage between adaptation and nature-based interventions. Furthermore, it is important to consider nature and ecosystems to avoid unintended consequences of climate adaptation action if impacts, vulnerabilities and exposure to climate change are not sufficiently assessed and addressed.

The UAE Consensus also established a Mission 1.5 to be carried out by the Troika of Presidencies of the UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil. In their two letters to Parties, the Troika has reported on its mission to create enabling environments for 1.5°C alignment. In the second, it highlights the importance of “*leveraging synergies between climate and biodiversity agendas when advancing the implementation of ambitious*

Proposal: “Baku Work Programme on Climate and Nature”

We propose a Baku Work Programme on Climate and Nature to be created in a Cover Decision at COP29, with a year for Parties to discuss and propose a draft decision to be adopted at COP30, in Brazil (*following the model of the Mitigation and the Just Transition Work Programmes*). The programme could benefit from an AHTEG on ecosystem integrity, as proposed by CAN International, to provide technical recommendations for the themes highlighted below.

The first outcome of the Baku Joint Work on Climate and Nature should be a roadmap that focuses at least on the following outcomes:

- Implementing the COP26 and COP27 cover decisions on nature and nature-based solutions;
- Implementing the UAE Consensus guidance on nature and ecosystems in NDCs;
- Exploring synergies between implementation plans from the climate and biodiversity regimes (NDCs, NBSAPs and NAPs) to maximize societal benefits
- Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises;
- Identifying and overcoming challenges to implementing climate and nature measures and policies in a synergistic manner;
- Mainstreaming and financing nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches.

We fully recognize that the outcome of other processes - such as the Oceans Dialogues, the Sharm-El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security and the GST implementation dialogue - should be taken into consideration by this workstream.

NDCs”. As stated above, science has been unequivocal in that conservation and restoration of ecosystems should be a key component in guaranteeing such alignment.

Multiple initiatives and pledges have been adopted under the Action Agenda NSA, Champions and Presidency initiatives. At COP28 a Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People was launched by present and future UNFCCC and CBD presidencies of the UAE, Brazil, China and Colombia, and signed by other 14 countries. Many pledges and initiatives related to nature have also been launched at recent previous COPs. But tracking their progress and assessing their real contribution to the Paris Agreement goals has not yet taken place in an organized and transparent manner.

Despite all those advances, WWF has identified an implementation gap for nature-related climate action. **We believe that synergies between climate and nature must be integrated in national mitigation and adaptation strategies, targets and objectives and those must be aligned with biodiversity national strategies and plans.** We also believe synergies must be considered under a whole-of-society approach, taking into account human rights and in partnership with local communities and indigenous peoples.

Duration

We envisage a minimum duration of four years for the workstream, with a decision to be adopted on conclusions/recommendations and its continuation. The conclusions/recommendations should feed into the next GST, but a workshop could take place in Bonn in 2025 to propose recommendations for the NDCs still to be presented and keep momentum for the synergies’ agenda.

Workshops and Ministerial meetings

The workstream would be composed of an implementation component focused on designing solutions and accessing progress on specific themes (workshops) and a political component (Ministerials) with recommendations for Parties.

Following the model of the Koronivia/Sharm El Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture, we suggest 4 workshops to take place at Bonn Sessions, with a report to be sent to a Ministerial that should take place at COPs. At the end of the workshops, a report should be prepared and sent to Ministers for discussions at the Ministerial meetings.

Suggested themes for workshops:

- Nature in NDCs and Long Term Strategies
- Synergies between NDCs, NAPs, Long Term strategies and NBSAPs
- Mainstreaming and financing nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches.
- Transparency Framework/MRV of co-benefits
- Regional perspectives on climate and nature

Submissions

Parties and Observers can be invited to present submissions on suggested topics for discussion.

Annex I

Processes under the UNFCCC considered for the proposal

- **Former Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture/Current Sharm-El-Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security:**

This workstream was adopted at COP23 in 2017, as a request to SBSTA and SBI to jointly address issues related to agriculture, including through workshops and expert meetings. Six elements for the work were then identified. After that, a Koronivia Roadmap was developed, including opportunities for submissions and the six workshops that took place between 2018 and 2020. According to the Roadmap, in 2022 a report was presented to COP26 on progress and outcomes of work, including potential future topics. At COP27 there was a decision to continue this work for four years. Positive aspects are the structure of workshops and its mandate as a negotiation process. Shortcomings are its very large scope and the difficulty to get consensus among parties on recommendations.

- **Oceans Dialogue:**

COP25 mandated an Oceans and Climate Change Dialogue and a Land and Adaptation Dialogue in its cover decision named “Chile Madrid Time for Action” (Decision 1/CP.25, paras 30-34). Both dialogues happened for the first time in December 2020. In 2021 the Glasgow Climate Pact Decision welcomed the summary report from the first Oceans and Climate Dialogue and invited the SBSTA to hold an annual dialogue to strengthen ocean-based action. The Oceans and Climate Dialogue then became a recurring event that took place in the subsequent Bonn Sessions (June 15, 2022 and June 13-14, 2023). A good aspect from this process is its structure: two co-facilitators are selected by Parties biennially and be responsible for deciding the topics for and conducting the dialogue, in consultation with Parties and observers, and preparing an informal summary report to be presented to the next COP. Shortcomings are that this is not a negotiation process, so it has no mandate to produce recommendations to incorporate ocean-related action in climate plans.

- **Mitigation Work Programme and Just Transition Work Programme**

The Mitigation Work Programme was created at COP26 with a mandate for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the global stocktake. At COP27 it was decided that at least two global dialogues should be held each year, with one to be held prior to the first regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies and one prior to the second regular sessions of the subsidiary bodies. The UNFCCC secretariat organizes, under the guidance of the co-chairs of the work programme and with the support of the high-level champions, on the margins of the dialogues, investment-focused events, considering the cost of mitigation implementation, with a view to unlocking finance. The topic for the 2023 events was *Accelerating Just Transition*, and the topic for 2024 is *Cities: Buildings and Urban Systems*. The MWP started in 2023 and will last at least till 2026, when a decision on its continuation should be adopted. WWF believes that the reports of the MWP should provide guidance to countries on enhancing their NDCs and that its measure of success should be the number of concrete funded partnerships on its topics.

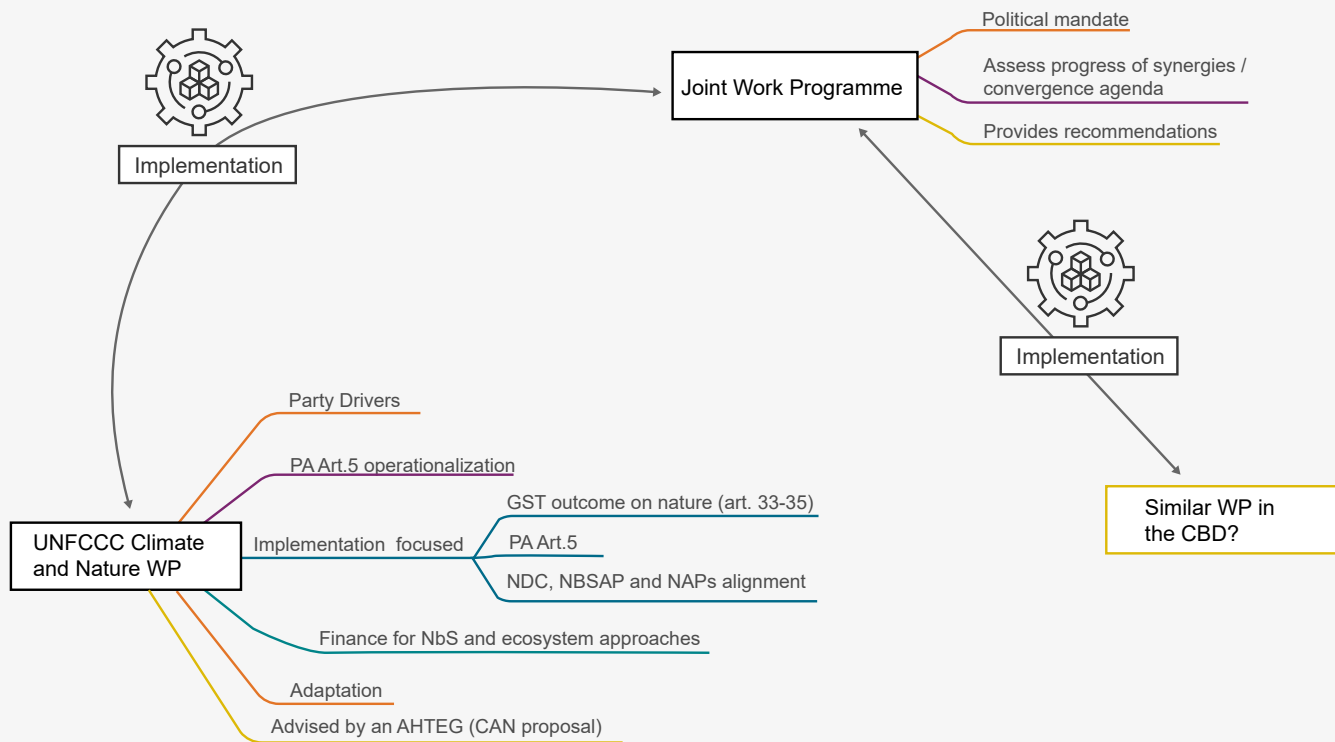
- **Just transition Work Programme**

The Just Transition Work Programme follows the same model of the Mitigation Work Programme on the Global Dialogues. It was established in 2022 at COP27 for the discussion of pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement outlined in Article 2, paragraph 1 and a decision on its structure and content was adopted at COP28. The topic for the first Global Dialogue in June 2024 is “*Just Transition pathways to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement through NDCs, NAPs and LT-LEDs*”.

- **UAE-Belem Work Programme on Indicators**

The UAE-Belem work programme on the development of indicators was established at COP28. It is a two-year work programme to develop indicators for measuring the progress achieved towards the targets outlined in the framework for global goal on adaptation or the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience. The indicators to be developed for the target on ecosystems and biodiversity will forge connections with existing indicators, most notably from the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Annex II - Joint Work Programme/Workstreams under Conventions



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